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SUBJECT: FINLAND: PREVIEW OF EU INFORMAL DEFENSE MINISTERS' MEETING

Classified By: PolChief Gregory D. Thome, for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

¶1. (SBU) Summary. The Oct. 2-3 informal EU defense ministers' meeting will focus on operations in Bosnia, Sudan, and Congo; review the EU's force catalogue and the state of civil-military coordination; and discuss the European Defense Agency's (EDA) long term planning scenarios. NATO SYG de Hoop Scheffer and UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari will brief on EU-NATO cooperation and the Kosovo status talks, respectively. The final session will be devoted to European (but non-ESDP) military support to UNIFIL in Lebanon. End summary.

¶2. (U) Emboffs and DATT called on Finnish MFA Counselor for EU and ESDP Issues Mikko Kinnunen and Defense Ministry Policy Director Pauli Jarvenpaa on September 25 to obtain a preview of the EU's informal defense ministerial meeting to be held Oct. 2-3 in Levi, Finland.

Bosnia

¶3. (SBU) The informal defense ministerial will open Oct. 2 with a session on current ESDP operations in Bosnia, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In Bosnia ministers will aim at coordinating a drawdown expected to begin shortly after the October elections. The EU acknowledges Althea to be an overstaffed mission, although there is still some disagreement among member states regarding the best "shape and size," as well as how quickly the drawdown should occur, Kinnunen said. (Britain and Netherlands favor reductions while Germany is more cautious.) The Finns aim for a coordinated, planned reshaping and hope to avoid a string of unilateral reductions. Finland would see its forces in Bosnia drop by 70 to about 100 on January 1 when they turn control of a Finnish-manned command and control center in Tuzla over to the Greeks.

Sudan, Congo

¶4. (SBU) Ministers will also consider the future of the AMIS mission in Sudan which, while not technically an ESDP mission, has been largely funded by the EU. Tentative plans call for ad hoc British and Dutch financial support to float the mission during November and December, after EU funding runs out in October. The AU has agreed to add 4000 troops to the 7000 already on the ground, but funding the mission for early 2007 -- until the operation is hopefully turned over to the UN -- will be a central concern, according to Kinnunen.

¶5. (SBU) The EU will evaluate the ESDP mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, slated to end four months after the first round of elections (Nov. 29). Kinnunen noted that

an extension of a couple of weeks would not be problematic. However Finland, Germany, and the Netherlands, in particular, are under pressure to wrap the current mission up promptly because the Dutch and German troops, as well as the Potsdam control center, are slated to serve the German-Dutch-Finnish EU Battle Group that goes on call on January 1.

Capabilities and Civ-Mil

¶6. (SBU) Ministers will likely approve the EU's 2006 Force Catalogue for adoption by the European Council in November or December. Jarvenpaa explained that the catalogue creates a standardized list of capabilities volunteered by EU member states for use in EU missions. The catalogue will allow a comparison of the forces available with the forces needed in order to carry out desired EU operations, with the hope that EU members would step forward to fill any gaps revealed in the comparison. On civil-military relations, Finland has worked with the EU's situation center to develop recommendations for information and, to a more limited extent, intelligence sharing among civil and military units in an operational area. Ministers will discuss the recommendations with an eye to having the Council adopt them in November. The board of the European Defense Agency -- which includes the ministers-- will meet on October 3 to discuss the EDA's analysis of the threat scenario 20-25 years hence and the crisis management tools that will be needed to address those threats. The EDA is also expected to approve the financing plan and priorities list for the next 3 years.

EU-NATO Cooperation

¶7. (C) The Finns hope to underscore the importance of EU-NATO cooperation throughout the meeting. Jarvenpaa was visibly pleased that NATO SYG de Hoop Scheffer would be attending the first part of the ministerial and hoped that the Levi meeting would set a precedent for NATO SYG participation. Kinnunen

noted that Germany planned to make EU-NATO relations even more visible during its presidency and hoped that problems with individual countries such as Turkey and Cyprus would not impede this.

¶8. (SBU) Kosovo and Lebanon will also be on the agenda, with ministers examining the future prospects for rule of law and police training missions. An EU planning team was already preparing a future civilian crisis management operation in Kosovo, and the Council and Commission are considering the appropriateness of such a mission to bolster the Lebanese government's administrative capabilities.

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